# MACROMEDIA



On The

Desktop



Type Terminology on the Desktop contains definitions of type-related terms that are commonly used on the computer. We created this book because of confusion (and major debates amongst ourselves) when using terms like font and typeface. We decided it was time to set the record straight.

For instance, in traditional typography the term font originally referred to a complete set (or alphabet) of type in one size and style, like the font you are reading which is 10 point Goudy Oldstyle. On the Macintosh, however, the term "font" has come to represent a family of type which includes all the sizes and styles. Font is often confused with the term typeface, which originally referred to a set of characters that had the same design: Goudy, Bodoni, Garamond, and Caslon are just a few.

A font is simply a collection of symbols. We use icons
(a form of symbol) after each term to indicate where it
originated. The pen \$\forall\$ indicates that the word is a
"traditional" type term; the disk \$\overline{\text{len}}\$ indicates that the word
is "modern" and originated with the advent and use of
desktop typography. If there are two symbols, it means
that the word has withstood the march of time to become
a desktop term.

We probably won't change anyone's opinion regarding the distinction between a font and a typeface, but we do hope that this book will be useful when you need a quick definition. DESKTOP

Traditional Selectronic

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## Credits

This book was researched and compiled by Claudia Buisson and Katharine Green from the sources listed in the Bibliography. We had lots of assistance from Andrew Meit who became our "in-house" typographic consultant. J. Stewart Huey created the illustrations as Fontographer fonts and Aldus FreeHand EPS files. We'd also like to give our special thanks to our friends Richard Beatty, David Berlow, and Richard Mitchell for their invaluable assistance and expertise.

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911106 Rev 1

(Adobe Font Metrics) A specification for storing (in a text file) font metrics information such as character widths, kerning pairs, and character bounding boxes.

## alphabet

abcde

## \$ E

The characters of a given language, arranged in a traditional order.

## αβγδε

apex

## 9 🖃



Where strokes come together at the uppermost point of a character.

### агт



The short, upward-sloping stroke or horizontal projection of characters like the 'X' and 'L'

## ascender

The part of upward-reaching letters, such as 'b,' 'd,' 'f,' 'h,' 'k,' and 'l,' that extends up above the x-height. An ascender should be in proportion with the x-height for legibility. (See ascender line.)

## ascender line

The imaginary horizontal line that represents the uppermost point of an ascender.

### ascent

## 78

A font's maximum distance above the baseline.

## ASCII

(American Standard Code for Information Interchange) A computerized numbering scheme used to represent text characters. Pronounced "ask-ee."

## ATM

(Adobe Type Manager) A program that improves your screen display by imaging fonts directly from their Type I PostScript language font files.

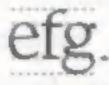
## bar



The enclosed horizontal stroke in characters like 'A,' 'H,' and 'e.'

## baseline

## 9 1



The imaginary horizontal line on which all letters in a font rest. Leading is measured from baseline to baseline. Also known as the "reading line."

## BCP

(Bézier Control Point) One of two points which guide a Bézier curve.

## Bézier curve



Mathematical equations commonly used to describe the shapes of characters in electronic typography. The Bézier curve was named for Pierre Bêzier, a French computer scientist who developed the mathematical representation used to describe that curve.

## bitmap... cap line

## bitmap

Alternating characters in an up and down position.

## graphic display. Each pixel (or picture element)

## bowl

bounce

corresponds to bits in the processor's memory.

The enclosed oval or round curve of letters like 'D,' 'g,' 'b,' and 'o.'

## bitmap font

## A font which is made up of

## caching

pixels (or square dots). Bitmap fonts typically work in tandem with outline fonts, with bitmap fonts being used on the screen, and connected outline fonts automatically used in the printer. Also known as a "screen font."

These heavy, black type-

faces (whose capital letters

are often ornate) were the

very first metal type. The

earliest of these were from

the Gutenberg workshop

and were copies of letters

manuscripts. Also known as

The type's point size which

is determined by measuring

from the highest ascender

(plus any additional white

to the lowest descender

found in handwritten

"Old English."

A matrix of individual dots

or pixels that makes up the

The process that saves bitmaps in memory or on the printer's hard disk in order to minimize the amount of time spent generating bitmaps. The first time a particular letter is imaged, its bitmap is generated and cached. Subsequent uses of that letter can use the cached version for huge performance gains.

## Blackletter

## 7 8

## calligraphic



In typography, this usually refers to Roman or Italic alphabets which appear to have been written with a pen or brush. Derived from the Greek word "kalligraphia," which means "beautiful writing."

## body size

## 9 1

cap height

The height of uppercase letters. (See cap line.)

**boldface** 

## space to the descender line).

## cap line

## 9 8



A dark typeface used for emphasis, usually heavier in weight



The imaginary line which represents the uppermost part of capital letters and some character's ascenders.

## character... dingbats

## character

9 🖽

Zo? £%\$

A symbol in writing. A letter, punctuation mark, or figure.

## character set

A single font's characters, AaBbCc symbols, and numbers. 123?!:."

## condensed

Characters which are narrower to fit into a compact space. A properly condensed character should fit into a smaller space without making it too thin or reducing the character's height.

## contrast

Helyetica

An indication of the difference between the thicker and thinner parts of characters in a typeface. Bodoni, with its thin serifs and horizontal strokes and thick verticals, is a high contrast face. Helvetica (and most Egyptians) is a low contrast face.

counter



The enclosed (or partially enclosed) space within letters such as 'c.' 'e.' 's.' 'H.' and 'g.' Often confused with "bowl."

## cross stroke

The part of the letter that cuts horizontally across the stern, like in the letters 't' and 'f.' Also known as the "cross bar."



## cursive

## carsive

First used in the 16th century, these typefaces imitate handwriting. Script letters and cursive typefaces appear to be drawn with pen and ink. Unlike script, however, cursive letters are not joined.

## descender



The lowest portion of letters such as 'g,' 'j,' 'p,' 'q,' and 'y' that extends below the baseline, or reading line of type. (See descender line.)

### descender line



The lowest line that a character's descender extends to, like the bottom stern of the lowercase 'j' and 'y.'

## descent

A font's maximum distance below the baseline.

## diacritic



A mark, like a circumilex accent mark cedilla, or umlaut, which is added to a letter to give it a special phonetic value, or to distinguish words which are otherwise graphically identical. Also called "accent."

## dingbats

P 12



Once known as "printer's flowers," these are the small decorative marks, bullets, or symbols that usually make up a specialty face. Zapf Dingbats is one well-known example of a dingbat font.

## display face... em square

## display face

A larger and bolder version of a text face (14 points or more) which is used for headlines and sub-headlines.

## downloadable font

A font file that contains character descriptions that are copied from the computer and temporarily stored in the printer's memory while a document is printing.

## dpi

(Dots per inch) The measure of resolution for a video monitor or printer. High-resolution printers are usually at least 1000 dpi. Laser printers typically have a resolution of 300 dpi; monitors are usually 72 dpi.

## drop cap

An oversized capital letter used at the start of a paragraph. Drop caps occupy two or more lines of body copy.

### ear

paragraphs.

op caps can

effective at

be very

the beginning of



The projection on letters like the lowercase 'g' and 'p.'

## Egyptian

A typeface style with slab or square serifs, these lack contrast (i.e., in a serif face, thick serifs and stems that are normally thin are fat). Also known as "Western" faces since they are reminiscent of the old American West, these are

sometimes made up of human forms and floral figures, and are one of the oldest reminders of the craftsmanship of the 19th century - before modern journalism and printing techniques came into being. Still with us today, some of these faces are so bold and condensed that they hardly have any white space between the letters.

### em



A unit of measure, which is the square of a face's point size. Traditionally, the width of a face's widest letter, the capital 'M.' For instance, if the 'M' is 10 points wide, an em is equal to 10 points.

## em dash

7 =



One em wide, the em dash indicates missing material or a break in thought. Spaces may be added to both sides of the em dash.

## em square



A square the size of a capital letter 'M,' which extends to the descender line. The em square received its name from the capital 'M' that filled the piece of metal used to form the type body in early printing days.

### em space

## 6 1

Space equal to the width of a typeface's point size.

A space equal to the width of a typeface's point size. Often used for paragraph indentions. Traditionally, the em space was created by non-printing blocks of metal used to add space between words.

## em units



Dimensionless distancemeasuring units used in Altsys' software program Fontographer.

### en





A unit of measure which is equal to half of a typeface's point size. Traditionally, an en was half the width of an em.

## en dash





One en wide, the en dash indicates duration, "to" or "through" such as, "refer to pages 4–9." It may also be used in compound adjectives (as in post–World War II). A space can be added to both sides of the en dash.

## en space

## D D

A space which is equal to half an em space.

## **EPS**



(Encapsulated PostScript)
A computer document file format jointly developed by Altsys, Aldus, Adobe, and Quark, which expedites the exchange of PostScript graphics files between applications. Also known as "EPSF."

## expanded

## 9



A typeface whose letters have been made wider without visually adding weight.

### extended

### 8 [



A typeface whose letters are stretched (or expanded) horizontally while still retaining their original height.

## family

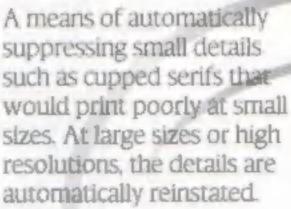
## \$ B

Times Italic
Times Bold
Times Bold Italic

All the type sizes and styles of one typeface. A complete character set of a font. The group shares a common design but can differ in attributes such as character width, weight, and posture (i.e., Roman vs. Italic). A typical computer family unit frequently contains four fonts — Roman, Italic, Bold, and BoldItalic — in all sizes.

## flex





## FOND... Gothic

## FOND

(FONt family Descriptor)
FONDs define the relationship between a plain
Macintosh font and its
styles (such as Bold, Italic,
and BoldItalic). The FOND
groups a family of fonts and
contains the family name,
the style, and size, as well as
metrics information like
fractional width tables and
kerning tables.

## FONT

Old Macintosh bitmap font size resource name. (See NFNT.)

## font

In modern usage, the term "font" is often confused with "typeface" and "family." Traditionally, the term "font" represents a complete set of characters or symbols, which share the same size and style. For example, 12 point Goudy Oldstyle Bold is a font. Fonts can be as small as the basic alphabet or up to hundreds of characters. Some languages, like Japanese, can exceed these numbers, which make them more difficult to access from the standard keyboard. Derived from the word "found" as in typefoundry.

## **Fontastic Plus**

Altsys Corporation's specialized bitmap font editor designed to create bitmap fonts and customize

existing bitmap character sets with distinctive characters, logos, and graphics. Fontastic Plus can also be used to add kerning pairs to any font.

## **Fontographer**

Altsys Corporation's specialized graphics editor designed to simplify the editing and creation of high-quality fonts, logos, typefaces, and other intricate PostScript and TrueType artwork. In addition to generating EPS outlines for use in Post-Script illustration programs. Fontographer generates Type 1 PostScript-language fonts (for the Macintosh, IBM-compatible PCs, and NeXT) as well as TrueType and Type 3 PostScript fonts (for iBM-compatible PCs and the Macintosh).

## Gothic

Letter

**Bothic** 

In modern usage, Gothic refers to sans serif monoweight letters (for example, Letter Gothic). These have little contrast of thick and thin lines, and no ornamentation, yet still retain the intensive boldness of the traditional Gothic. After the invention of typography by Gutenberg in AD 1450, the traditional Gothic style of lettering fell into the shadow of Venetian Old Style typography.

## geometric

## \$ E

## Futura Lubalin

Serif or sans serif designs composed of visually geometric character shapes. Some good examples are Lubalin Graph, Avant Garde, and Futura.

## hints

## 

Computer algorithms which enhance the appearance of characters printed or imaged at low resolutions (72-600 dpi). ATM can take advantage of hints in Type 1 PostScript fonts to render more uniformly shaped screen fonts across the character set.

## initial cap

## € E

nitial caps are also known as ornamental caps. Large, capital letters (often ornamental) which are found at the beginning of paragraphs or chapters. These date back to the early days of European manuscripts where they were (and still are) considered works of art. Before printing presses replaced handlettering, a few talented scribes drew the characters into spaces left in the manuscripts for that purpose.

## italic

ff

Best used to set off quotes, special phrases, and foreign words, italic letters have a redesigned structure that allows them to slant to the right. The first italic type was designed by Aldus Manutius in AD 1501 and was based on the handwriting style of that time.

Furthermore, lowercase letters were in italics while capital letters were Roman (or vertical stance).

## justified text

### 9 0

This is text that lines up at both the left and right margins. Also known as fully justified.

Text that lines up at both the left and right margins. Also known as "fully justified."

## kerning

## 0 5

To To The process of improving appearance and legibility by adjusting the white space between certain paired characters, such as 'Ty,' To,' or 'Ye,' which are known as "kerning pairs." Manual kerning allows the desktop publisher to move letters either closer or farther apart to adjust and improve the space between them. Automatic kerning on the computer is done by using a kerning table (an AFM file) that contains predefined font-specific kerning pairs. Sometimes incorrectly referred to "minus setting."

## leading

## 8 1



Pronounced "ledding," this is the space (measured in points) between rows of text, from baseline to baseline (i.e., 12 on 12 means there is no additional leading; 12 on 13 is 12 point type with one additional point of leading). This term is taken from the days when thin strips of lead were placed between lines of type to space them apart.



12/14



## left justified... Modern

## left justified

This is type that is aligned with its left margin Also called this bleft.

## \$ L

Type that is aligned with its left margin. Also called "flush left."

## letterspacing

## Heltittlehr

## 7 6

Separating all the letters in a word with spaces. Best used to modify headings, this should be applied with caution since too much letterspacing makes copy difficult to read. Some programs automatically add letterspacing when the text is justified. (See tracking.)

## ligated



## 0 🖽

A typeface that has connections between letters. Formal and informal scripts are the most common examples of ligated typefaces. Characters like 'fi.' 'fl.' or 'st' may be ligated in typefaces that are otherwise unconnected.

## ligature



## 4 1

One character that is made up of two or more letters.

## lowercase

abc def

## 争品

These are the small letters of a typeface. Originally, small letters were stored in the lower section of the printer's typecase, hence the term "lowercase." Once known as "minuscules."

### mean line



## E ...

The top (imaginary) point of all lowercase characters without ascenders. Also called "x-height."

## Metamorphosis Professional

Altsys Corporation's complete font conversion utility which creates editable outlines and other computer font formats from PostScript, as well as, TrueType fonts, Meta Pro has the ability to convert entire PostScript and TrueType typefaces and specific lines of text into PICT, EPS outlines, automatically-hinted TrueType fonts (for the Macintosh and PC-Windows). Type 1 PostScript fonts (Macintosh, PC-Windows, and NeXT). Type 3 PostScript fonts (Madntoshand PC-Windows). and Fontographer database files.

## metrics



Font information such such ascent, descent, leading, character widths, and keming.

## Modern



## Modern

A modified version of Old Style, these high contrast letters have heavy, untapered stems and light serifs. Originally developed by Firmin Didot and Giambattista Bodoni during the late 18th and early 19th centuries.

## monospaced type 🧵 🖘



## just MONO

Like typewritten characters. these all have the same width and take up the same amount of space. Use of this type allows figures to be set in vertical rows without leaving a ragged appearance (as opposed to proportional type).

## MENT



(New FoNT) The Macintosh font resource which contains your bitmap screen font. NFNTs have a wider range of font identification numbers than the older FONTs. NFNTs opened up another 16,000 FOND ID numbers when they were introduced by Apple with the Macintosh Plus.

## **Oblique**





A right slanted version of a Roman typeface without changes to the letter's design Often confused with Italic.

## Old Style

## 

## Garamond Caslon

Characterized by variations in stroke width, bracketed serifs, high contrast, and a diagonal stroke. Some popular Old Styles include Bembo, Garamond, Janson. and Caslon. Originally developed during the Renaissance and adopted by Venetian printers at the 15th century, these were based on pen-drawn forms.

## outline font





A font that is defined by drawing the black contour of the white space that makes up each character. It is made up typically of Bézier curves for PostScript fonts and quadratic splines for TrueType fonts. Both these fonts can be scaled to any size; therefore, one set of outlines can be used for any size in a typeface.

## permanent font



A font which is downloaded to the printer, onto a hard disk, or in ROM, and resides there until the power is turned off.

## pica



A typographic measurement that has survived the digital revolution. A computer pica is equal to 12 points (one-sixth of an inch). 12 points = 1 pica; 6 picas = 1 inch; 72 points = 1 inch.

## pixel



(Stands for PICture Ellement) Pixels are square dots that represent the smallest units displayed on a computer screen. The standard Macintosh monitor displays about 72 pixels per inch. Characters or graphics are created by turning pixels on or off.

## point... resolution

## point

9 🗒

In modern desktop publishing, one point is defined to be equal to 1/72 of an inch. The traditional point measurement was slightly more or less than 72 points to the inch (depending on the typesetting measurement system).

## point size

\$ E

The height of the type body. A standard type measurement system was originally developed by the Parisian type founder Pierre Fournier le jeune in 1737. In the days of metal type, the point size was the total number of points in the height of metal type, including the ascent and descent of the letters. and the metal above and below the letters (i.e., builtin leading).

## PostScript



Adobe System's page description language. Programs like Aldus FreeHand use PostScript to create complex pages, text, and graphies onscreen. This language is then sent to the printer to produce highquality printed text and graphics.

## printer font



A font (i.e., Helvetica or Times) that can be downloaded to the printer, onto a hard disk or in ROM, that then resides in the printer.

## proportionally spaced type 🧍 🔙



# JUST

Type whose character widths vary according to the features of the letters (as opposed to monospaced type).

## RAM



(Random Access Memory) The computer or printer's temporary place for storing data. When the computer or printer is turned off, the information in RAM is erased.

## rasterization



The process of converting outlines into bitmaps. The outlines are scaled to the desired size and filled by turning on pixels inside the outline. (See pixel.)

## rendering



The actual placement of rasterized pixels on the monitor's display. Refers both to graphic objects and type, particularly for fonts using hints. Also called "rasterization."

## resident font



A font that resides permanently in the ROM of a printer.

## resolution



The number of dots in an image's screen display or printed output. A monitor's resolution refers to the number of pixels per linear inch. Printed resolution refers to dots per linear inch (See dpi.)

## reverse type

## Ť ez

## Reverse

White characters on a dark background. A good way to grab the reader's attention.

## right justified

## 7 6

This is type augment with its right mangin. Also known as thesh right.

Type aligned with its right margin. Also known as "flush right."

### RIP

### -

(Raster Image Processor)
Converts fonts and graphics into raster images, which are used by the printer to draw onto the page.

### Roman

## 7 3

## Roman

In Macintosh font menus.
this is called Plain, meaning
text that has no style applied
to it (i.e., Italic, Bold.
Bolditalic). Roman fonts are
upright, thick-and-thin
weighted, and usually serifed
type. The classical Roman
letter style began in A.D. 114
with letters chiseled in the
stone of the Trajan Columns
in Rome.

## sans serif

### 휘닎

A typeface without serifs.

Sans serif type is more legible in headings than in a long passage of text.

Helvetica is an example of sans serif typeface. First designed by William Caslon IV in 1816, it was originally referred to as "English Egyptian." Also known as "Gothic" in the United States and "Grotesque" in Europe.

## screen font

## Bitmap fonts used for computer screen display.

## Script

## 9 [

Script

Script letters are joined and should not be confused with cursive, which are not connected. Since script is difficult to read, its use should be limited to a few lines at a time. Early script typefaces were developed in the sixteenth century, and were based upon formal cursive handwriting.

## serif

## 8 🗟



INS-HOUSE

Small, finishing strokes on the arms, stems, and tails of characters. Serif typefaces are usually used for text, since the serifs form a link between letters that leads the eye across a line of type.

## 9 🗒

The width of a letter and its surrounding space; the space needed to set a line of text in a spedific typeface. Some programs have tracking to adjust the typeface to make it set looser or tighter. Also known as "advance width,"

## side bearing

## T I



The space between the origin of a character and its leftmost point (left side bearing), or the space between the rightmost point and width line (right side bearing).

## square serif... text face

## square serif



Originally designed at the beginning of the 19th century, these typefaces have squared-off serifs on the characters' end strokes. Also called "slab serif" or "Egyptian."

## small caps



Capital letters that are the same (or nearly the same) height as the typeface's x-height. Some software programs automatically create their own small caps, but true small caps (with correct proportions and weight) are usually only found in expert typefaces.

## spacing

## To be

The amount of unused space that exists between words, letters, and lines in text. Spacing provides a means to avoid overlapping shapes and letters in order to improve readability.

## spur



A finishing stroke like the ones on certain uppercase 'G's.

## stem



The upright element of a letter or character.

## stress



The vertical, horizontal, or diagonal emphasis on the stroke of a letter.

## style

Plain Bold Italic BoldItalic

A visual variation of a basic typeface used to create emphasis. Typestyle is important since it can attract (or repel) the reader's eye. The four basic computer styles are Plain, Bold, Italic, and BoldItalic.

## Style Herger



The Altsys utility that takes individual styled fonts and merges them into one font family.

## swash capitals 🖟 🔙





Uppercase letters that have flourishes added to them. Originally designed to go with Italic typefaces.

### tall





A character's downward projection such as on the letter 'Q.'

## terminals





Not serifs but ends of certain letter shapes such as the letters 'f,' 'j,' 'y,' 'r,' and 'a.'

### text



The main body of a printed document or book. Also called "copy."

## text face



Usually serifed fonts set in sizes from 9 to 12 points, these typefaces are easier to read in large sections than display faces. Some examples include Times and Goudy Oldstyle. Also called "bookface."

## thin space

8 1

A space equal to one-fifth of an en space.

## tracking

章 臣

The overall letterspacing in text. Tracking can also be used to tighten or loosen a block of type. Some programs have automatic tracking options which can add or remove small increments of space between the characters. (See letterspacing.)

## transient font

A font which stays in the printer's memory until the current document is finished being printed.

## **Transitional**

6 E

New Baskerville A typestyle which is characterized by moderate variations in stroke weight, smoothly-joined serifs, high contrast, and an almost vertical stress. First introduced in the late 18th century by John Baskerville.

## TrueType

An outline font format developed by Apple Computer (for use with System 7) and adopted by Microsoft Corporation (for use with versions of the Windows graphical user interface). These fonts can be used for both the screen display and printing, thereby eliminating the need to have two font files for each typeface.

## type

8 5

Printed or typewritten letters or characters. As early as AD 400, the Chinese printed entire pages of characters through the use of wooden blocks. Johann Gutenberg cast the first metal type in the 15th century.

## Type 1 PostScript font :

Adobe's encrypted font format which may or may not contain hints. Faster to render, more compact in file space, and better aesthetically than Type 3 fonts, these are compatible with ATM.

## Type 3 PostScript font 🖃

Sometimes referred to as user-defined fonts, these are non-encrypted fonts. Type 3 PostScript fonts can contain grayscale fills, complex characters, and stroked characters, ATM does not render Type 3 fonts onscreen.

## typeface

₽ 日

Often named after a designer, a typeface or "face" (e.g., Goudy Oldstyle) is an interpretation of a character set that shares a similar appearance and design. The character set includes letters, numbers, punctuation, and symbols. On computers, "typeface" is used interchangeably with the term "font."

## typography... x-height

## typography

7 -

Typography is the study and process of typefaces; how to select, size, arrange, and use them in general. In modern terms, typography includes computer display and output. Traditionally, typography was the use of metal types with raised letterforms that were inked and then pressed onto paper.

## Unclaf

9 13

## UNCIAL

A calligraphic typestyle that combines attributes of upper and lowercase letters, using large, rounded letterforms. Derived from "uncus," which in Latin means crooked. The half-uncial is another related typestyle.

## uppercase

7 E

ABC DEF The large, capital letters of a typeface. Once called "majuscules," these letters were stored in the upper section of the printer's typecase, hence the term "uppercase."

### vertex

A FF



Where the stems join at the lowest joint of a character.

## weight

9 🗒

Light Book Bold Black The measurement of a stroke's width. Common names for weights include demibold, light, and bold. Some typeface families have several weights, including ultra-bold and extra-light.

## word spacing

In a line of text, this is the amount of space between each word. It can be varied to adjust line length without affecting readability, unlike letterspacing.

## WYSIWYG

(What You See Is What You Get) Refers to a relatively accurate screen representation of the final printer output.

## x-height

7 13



The height of a face's lowercase letters, or the size from mean line to baseline of the lowercase 'x.' The lowercase 'x' is used for measurement since it usually sits squarely on the baseline and has no ascenders or descenders.

# MACROMEDIA